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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Institute of Standards and Technology

[Docket No. 940680-4300]

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APPROVAL OF  
FEDERAL INFORMATION PROCESSING STANDARDS PUBLICATION 192,  
APPLICATION PROFILE FOR THE GOVERNMENT  
INFORMATION LOCATOR SERVICE (GILS)

**AGENCY:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Commerce.

**ACTION:** The purpose of this notice is to announce that the Secretary of Commerce has approved a new standard, which will be published as FIPS Publication 192, Application Profile for the Government Information Locator Service (GILS).

**SUMMARY:** On July 5, 1994, notice was published in the *Federal Register* (59 FR 34414) that a Federal Information Processing Standard for Application Profile for the Government Information Locator Service (GILS) was being proposed for Federal use.

The written comments submitted by interested parties and other material available to the Department relevant to this standard were reviewed by NIST. On the basis of this review, NIST recommended that the Secretary approve the standard as a Federal Information Processing Standards Publication, and prepared a detailed justification document for the Secretary's review in support of that recommendation.

The detailed justification document which was presented to the Secretary is part of the public record and is available for inspection and copying in the Department's Central Reference and Records Inspection Facility, Room 6020, Herbert C. Hoover Building, 14th Street between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

This FIPS contains two sections: (1) An announcement section, which provides information concerning the applicability, implementation, and maintenance of the standard; and (2) a specifications section which deals with the technical requirements of the standard. Only the announcement section of the standard is provided in this notice.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This standard becomes effective June 30, 1995.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested parties may purchase copies of this standard, including the technical specifications section, from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). Specific ordering information from NTIS for this standard is set out in the Where to Obtain Copies Section of the announcement section of the standard.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Eliot Christian, (703) 648-7245, U.S. Geological Survey, 802 National Center, Reston, VA 22092.

Dated December 7, 1994  
Samuel Kramer, Associate Director

# Federal Information Processing Standards Publication 192

1994 December 7

## Announcing the Standard for

### APPLICATION PROFILE FOR THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION LOCATOR SERVICE (GILS)

Federal Information Processing Standards Publications (FIPS PUBS) are issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) after approval by the Secretary of Commerce pursuant to Section 111 (d) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 as amended by the Computer Security Act of 1987, Public Law 100-235.

**1. Name of Standard.** Application Profile for the Government Information Locator Service (GILS) (FIPS PUB 192).

**2. Category of Standard.** Software Standard, Information Interchange.

**3. Explanation.** This standard describes an application profile for the Government Information Locator Service (GILS). This application profile is based primarily on the American National Standard for Information Retrieval Application Service Definition and Protocol Specification for Open Systems Interconnection (ANSI/NISO Z39.50-1992), developed by the National Information Standards Organization (NISO). The Government Information Locator Service (GILS) is a decentralized collection of servers and associated information services that will be used by the public either directly or through intermediaries to find public information throughout the Federal government.

This GILS Profile specifies the use of ANSI/NISO Z39.50-1992 in information service applications and provides specifications for the overall GILS application, including the GILS Core and other aspects of a GILS server operating in the Internet environment. This GILS profile will enable GILS client systems to interconnect and to interoperate with any GILS server. This profile addresses intersystem interactions and information interchange for the GILS, but does not specify user interface requirements, the internal structure of databases that contain GILS Locator Records, or search engine functionality.

GILS servers will support search and retrieval by accepting a search query and returning a result set or diagnostic messages. GILS servers may also support browsing by accepting a well-known search query and returning a list of Locator Records in brief display format.

Some of the information resources pointed to by GILS Locator Records, as well as the GILS server itself, may be available electronically through other communications protocols including the common Internet protocols that facilitate electronic information transfer such as remote login (Telnet), File Transfer Protocol (FTP), and electronic mail. The use of SMTP and MIME protocols or other communications paths is outside the scope of the GILS Profile.

The GILS Profile was developed by a group of industry and government experts in ANSI/NISO Z39.50-1992 implementations, system implementations, and the organization of information. The specifications included in the GILS Profile reflect the consensus of this group based on its work and input from a range of stakeholders.

**4. Approving Authority.** Secretary of Commerce.

**5. Maintenance Agency.** U.S. Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey (USGS).

Questions concerning this standard are to be addressed to the Maintenance Agency: GILS Program, United States Geological Survey (USGS), 802 National Center, Reston, VA 22092. Users of this standard who need to be notified of changes that occur prior to the next publication of the standard should complete the Change Request Form provided in this publication and send it to: Standards Processing Coordinator (ADP), Computer Systems Laboratory, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD 20899. The NIST will issue Change Notices on an as-needed basis.

**6. Related Documents.**

- a. Federal Information Resources Management Regulations (FIRMR) subpart 201-20.303, Standards and subpart 201-39-1002, Federal Standards.
- b. Office of Management and Budget Bulletin 95-01, Establishment of Government Information Locator Service.
- c. American National Standard for Information Retrieval Application Service Definition and Protocol Specification for Open Systems Interconnection (ANSI/NISO Z39.50-1992).
- d. A list of additional references for the Application Profile is contained in section 5, References, of the specifications.

**7. Objectives.** The objectives of the Application Profile for the GILS are to:

- enable users to identify, locate, and access or acquire publicly available Federal information resources, including electronic information resources.
- provide a uniform approach to providing information locator services to the public.
- enable every agency to establish standards-based network-accessible locator records.

**8. Applicability.**

- a. This standard is recommended for use by Federal agencies in the development and establishment of information locators, i.e., information resources that identify other information resources, describe the information available in those resources, and provide assistance in how to obtain the information.
- b. This standard is required for use by Federal agencies in those information locators that are established and maintained as part of the Government Information Locator Service (GILS) pursuant to the requirements of OMB Bulletin 95-01 and other applicable, law, regulation, and policy.
- c. The GILS Core requirements of this standard apply to those GILS locator records which:

- describe information resources maintained by the Federal government;
- comply with the defined GILS Core Elements;
- are mutually accessible through interconnected electronic network facilities without charge to the direct user; and
- are designated by the agency to be part of the Federal government GILS Core, pursuant to OMB Bulletin 95-01.

**9. Specifications.** The Application Profile for the Government Information Locator Service, (affixed).

**10. Implementation.** The implementation of this standard involves three areas of consideration: development and acquisition of GILS implementations, validation, and interpretations of the standard.

**10.1 Development and Acquisition of GILS Implementations.** This standard is effective June 30, 1995.

**10.2 Validation.** Validation of GILS implementations is not required at this time. Testing for conformance to this standard is at the discretion of the agency. Agencies may select the tests to be administered and the testing organizations that administer the tests.

**10.3 Interpretation of this Standard.** Resolution of questions regarding this standard will be provided by NIST. Questions concerning the content and specifications should be addressed to:

Director  
 Computer Systems Laboratory  
 ATTN: FIPS for GILS Interpretation  
 National Institute of Standards and Technology  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20899  
 Telephone: (301) 975-2833

**11. Waivers.** Under certain exceptional circumstances, the heads of Federal departments and agencies may approve waivers to Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS). The head of such agency may redelegate such authority only to a senior official designated pursuant to Section 3506(b) of Title 44, U.S. Code. Waivers shall be granted only when:

- Compliance with a standard would adversely affect the accomplishment of the mission of an operator of a Federal computer system, or
- Cause a major adverse financial impact on the operator which is not offset by Governmentwide savings.

Agency heads may act upon a written waiver request containing the information detailed above. Agency heads may also act without a written waiver request when they determine that conditions for meeting the standard cannot be met. Agency heads may approve waivers only by a written decision which explains the basis on which the agency head made the required finding(s). A copy of each such decision, with procurement sensitive or classified portions clearly identified, shall be sent to: National Institute of Standards and Technology; Attn: FIPS Waiver Decisions, Technology Building, Room B-154; Gaithersburg, MD 20899.

In addition, notice of each waiver granted and each delegation of authority to approve waivers shall be sent promptly to the Committee on Government Operations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate and shall be published promptly in the *Federal Register*.

When the determination on a waiver applies to the procurement of equipment and/or services, a notice of the waiver determination must be published in the *Commerce Business Daily* as part of the notice of solicitation for offers of an acquisition or, if the waiver determination is made after that notice is published, by amendment to such notice.

A copy of the waiver, any supporting documents, the document approving the waiver and any supporting and accompanying documents, with such deletions as the agency is authorized and decides to make under 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552(b), shall be part of the procurement documentation and retained by the agency.

**12. Where to Obtain Copies.** Copies of this publication are for sale by the National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, VA 22161. (Sale of the included specifications document is by arrangement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS).) When ordering, refer to Federal Information Processing Standards Publication 192 (FIPSPUB192), and title. Payment may be made by check, money order, or deposit account.